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C O N F I D E N T I A L UNVIE VIENNA 000247

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR ISN/MNSA, VCI/NA, IO/T

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TAGS: [KTBT](#) [AORC](#) [PARM](#)

SUBJECT: CTBT: VIENNA P5 MEETING AT WORKING LEVEL -GUIDANCE  
REQUEST

Classified By: Ambassador Gregory L. Schulte. Reasons 1.4 b and d.

11. (U) The French Mission to international organizations in Vienna convened an initial meeting of P5 representatives to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) on April 30. Participants in the meeting spent most of their time delineating what might or might not profitably be done in such a format. The most significant strong agreement was that meetings of experts from P5 countries on the margins of Working Group B (WGB) would be potentially very useful in improving the productivity of WGB meetings.

12. (C) Both the Russian and Chinese delegates were clearly very pleased to meet at this level and in this grouping. The Chinese counselor had previously expressed unease at being a member of the G77 plus China and forthrightly stated it was more appropriate for China to participate in the P5. He remains under instruction, however, to join G77 consensus, clearly an overriding foreign policy consideration for China. Hence, there is no reason to expect immediate Chinese help on the budget or the schedule of meetings in Working Group B, but P5 meetings could serve as the thin edge of the wedge. The Chinese described P5 coordination on CTBT as necessary in light of the improving prospects for entry into force of the Treaty. He cited P5 cooperation in other multilateral arms-control fora as crucial. On Chinese ratification of the Treaty, he said his government continued to examine the issue carefully and was watching the U.S. ratification debate with keen interest.

13. (C) The Russian delegation seemed just as pleased to be participating, but the Russians were much less vocal and more cautious. Any decisions of note had to be referred to Moscow. The Russians also repeated several times that people at their Mission did not understand technical issues and had to ask advice from their experts. There were also warnings that Russia might not be able to afford to send experts to additional meetings, along with reminders that many Russian experts could not speak English and that translation would be necessary in any proposed meetings. The Russian delegation also emphasized they could not discuss political issues.

14. (C) Comment. In addition to organizing experts meetings on the margins of Working Group B, the P5 format in Vienna could be a convenient way to make suggestions in advance of meetings on which issues the USG believes are most important. All participants wanted to find means to avoid surprises in the plenary working group meetings. Sharing positions and

listing priorities through this grouping prior to scheduled meetings of the Preparatory Commission policy making organs could serve to help ensure greater progress and more substantive discussion. Mission requests guidance on further use of the proposed P5 format. End Comment.

15. (U) The official French minutes of the meeting state the following:

The participants

-- expressed unanimous interest in holding meetings at the missions at the counsellor and expert level, with the aim of exchanging information and views, in particular about the progress of the ratification process and the steps taken to aid entry into force of the CTBT;

-- acknowledged that the format of such meetings could however be inadequate for discussing highly technical issues;

-- agreed not to discuss purely political issues in such meetings;

-- agreed to organize, on a rotating basis, on the occasion of Working Group B sessions, meetings with experts coming from capitals with the aim of exchanging information and views on the technical issues to be discussed in the above-mentioned session;

-- agreed to organize, on a rotating basis and as appropriate, meetings at the missions at the counsellor and expert level before each session of the policy making organs

of the CTBTO PrepCom (WGA, WGB, Plenary sessions of the PrepCom), in order to discuss the issues on the agendas of such sessions.

SCHULTE